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SUBJECT: ARGENTINE MINISTER OF JUSTICE DESCRIBES SECURITY
PRIORITY IN INTRODUCTORY CALL BY AMBASSADOR

REF: A. BUENOS AIRES 1160
1B. DEA 05 2018Z NOV 09

¶1. (SBU) Summary: In the Ambassador's introductory courtesy call, Argentine Minister of Justice Alak welcomed USG interest in deepening cooperation on counter-narcotics, trafficking-in-persons (TIP) and other security issues. The Minister requested USG help in developing a national security plan and a national security studies institute, and he sought "urgent" help in designing appropriate passport security features for a new, government-produced passport. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) Argentine Minister of Justice, Security and Human Rights Julio Alak warmly received the Ambassador on November 5 for her introductory call at the Ministry (the two had met previously during a U.S.-sponsored training of Argentina's elite rapid reaction police force, the GEOF). Alak voiced appreciation for the broad and effective cooperation received from various elements in the Embassy, mentioning in particular a recent seizure (by the Uruguayan Coast Guard) of a major cocaine shipment transiting Argentina (ref B). Alak said that the Argentines had pursued the case, involving Croatian traffickers, for two months based on information provided by the U.S. DEA.

¶3. (SBU) Alak also voiced appreciation for the Embassy's advocacy on behalf of Police Commissioner Jorge Valleca, who was elected Vice President of Interpol for the Americas in September. Alak described with satisfaction Interpol plans to establish a training center for the Americas in Buenos Aires, an establishment he said would be Interpol's second largest institutional presence after the headquarters in Lyon.

¶4. (SBU) Ambassador voiced appreciation as well for the good cooperation between GOA law enforcement agencies and their American counterparts on issues such as counter-terrorism, counter-narcotics, and international crime. She thanked the Minister for inviting the Embassy Law Enforcement Working Group to make presentations to him on their priorities and recommendations (ref A).

¶5. (SBU) Ambassador then described her strong interest in helping Argentina address its challenges with trafficking-in-persons (TIP). She noted Argentina's impressive gains, including passage of a national law in 2008 and many law enforcement raids over the course of the year, with over 300 persons rescued from forced activities, in many cases prostitution. She emphasized the critical importance of Argentina authorities doing more to prosecute and convict traffickers as a deterrent to the activity.

¶6. (SBU) Minister Alak expressed agreement on the importance

of addressing TIP. He described it as a "terrible crime, especially as it affected girls forced into prostitution." Alak said that the GOA was considering legal reforms to require provincial governments to impose new restrictions on the informal night clubs that serve as informal brothels (Organized prostitution is already illegal, yet is more or less tolerated by many of the provinces.)

¶17. (SBU) Minister Alak described a top medium-term priority as developing a national security plan (see ref A). He showed the Ambassador an outline of the proposal he would present to the President before proceeding. The outline appeared to touch on all of the obvious law enforcement challenges in the country, including drugs, TIP, terrorism and money laundering.

¶18. (SBU) The Minister requested urgent help in understanding U.S. passport security features. He said that the GOA had decided not to renew a private contract for the production of its passports and would be turning the function over to the Casa de Moneda (essentially the Bureau of Printing and Engraving). Alak tied plans to upgrade the Argentine passport to returning to the U.S. visa waiver program. Embassy will follow-up with Alak's staff to better understand their plans and needs before developing a request for technical assistance from Washington.

¶19. (SBU) Comment: The meeting confirmed our earlier positive impression of Minister Alak's enthusiasm for working with the USG and his seriousness in tackling Argentina's many law enforcement challenges. He (and we) would benefit enormously from a visit to law enforcement agencies and other

USG dependencies in the United States. We will work to make such a visit happen.

MARTINEZ